



Massachusetts
Department
of
ENVIRONMENTAL
PROTECTION

Municipal Compliance Fact Sheet

Emergency Preparedness

What You Should Know About this Issue:

Recent headlines of major flood damage, water treatment plant break-ins, plus system failures, and industrial explosions in residential areas, confirms that emergencies can happen at any time, whether storm-related disasters, disease outbreaks, large-scale industrial or transportation accidents involving hazardous materials, or terrorist-related incidents. Having response plans and preparing for emergencies can help communities save lives, property and infrastructure, and speed recovery efforts.

Many federal and state tools for emergency preparedness planning have been developed to assist communities with planning for emergencies, including: The Department of Homeland Security has developed a "Ready" program that provides communities with special preparedness information, community and state information, and a host of downloadable check lists, brochures, and family emergency plans.

- The Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency provides community emergency planning templates as part of the State Emergency Response Commission. These can be downloaded and customized. A community hazardous material planning template can be found at:
www.mass.gov/Eeops/docs/mema/serc_certification_templates/single_community_hazmat_plan_template_2006.doc
- The Federal Emergency Management Agency has specific preparedness planning and free online training for communities on all aspects of emergency preparedness. Training information can be found at: www.fema.gov/about/training/index.shtml
- FEMA planning information can be found at: www.fema.gov/plan/index.shtm
- Ensure that municipal employees who may be involved with a large scale disaster are familiar with the National Incident Management systems (NIMS) at:
www.dhs.gov/xnews/releases/press_release_0363.shtm
- Emergency planning and preparedness is vital for all public water systems. Your community must have plans in place to address the most likely emergency situations. For more information on emergency preparedness and security visit:
www.mass.gov/dep/water/drinking/emmeresp.htm.

Examples of Municipal Facilities & Activities Involved:

The following situations at public facilities may result in emergencies:

- Power outages and chemical spills/releases at water and wastewater treatment facilities.
- Intentional or accidental disruption of operations at water or wastewater facilities.
- Chemical or fuel spills or releases at municipal facilities like DPW's, UST's, etc.
- Large volume and unique debris challenges after major storm events.

Common Compliance Issues:

During large-scale emergencies, municipalities may be faced with issues such as:

- Safe disposal of large quantities of waste that have been contaminated with oil, hazardous materials, or biohazards.
- Timely notification for releases of hazardous materials in excess of notification thresholds.
- Inadequate, outdated, or untested Continuity Of Operations Plans (COOP).
- Inadequate understanding of NIMS/ICS (National Incident Management System/Incident Command Systems).
- Inadequate or poorly maintained public facility security systems.
- Inadequate, outdated or untested emergency preparedness plans (such as emergency response plans for drinking water treatment plants).



- Inadequate backup power systems or designated large portable power supply unit contracts for treatment plants.

Having emergency preparedness plans that address these common compliance issues are beneficial. All contingency plans should be tested and revised based on lessons learned.

Environmental Stewardship Tips:

Before disaster strikes:

- Ensure that municipal employees who may be involved in large-scale disasters are trained in NIMS/ICS.
- Police Departments, Fire Departments, and Emergency Medical Services should develop and test mutual aid compacts for large-scale incidents.
- Plans for backup drinking water supplies should be developed, including interconnection agreements and bottled water contracts.
- Public facility/community evacuation, shelter-in-place notification procedures, and reverse 911 plans should be prepared and circulated.
- DPW-specific disaster response activity plans such as trash removal contingencies, location of debris management staging areas, and evacuation traffic route postings, should be developed and tested.
- Identify municipal facilities that store oil and/or hazardous material and ensure that emergency response exist for each facility.
- Identify facilities within flood zones and prepare plans to safe guard any hazardous material within the facilities; and
- Maintain records of emergency response plans for oil and/or hazardous material facilities within the community.

After an emergency or disaster MassDEP is available to assist communities with:

- Advice regarding appropriate disposal of debris and oil or hazardous waste.
- Responding to flooded basements with heating fuel releases; and
- Responding to oil and/or hazardous material releases commingled with floodwaters.

Technical Assistance, Outreach, Grants & Loans:

US Department of Homeland: Preparedness and Response link: www.dhs.gov/xprepresp
"Ready" home page www.ready.gov/america/index.html

MassDEP Marine Oil Spill Preparedness and Response Information:
www.mass.gov/dep/cleanup/oilsprep.htm

Executive Office of Public Safety - Planning and Preparedness link:
www.mass.gov/eops/HomelandSecurity&EmergencyResponse/

Community Emergency Response Team www.massemergency.com/CERT.htm

The Department of Homeland Security provides grants to local communities to assist in preparing for and responding to emergencies. Grant information can be found at:
www.dhs.gov/xopnbiz/grants/

MassDEP Contacts:

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